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Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of)
)
Reallocation of Television Channels) RT Docket No. 97-157
60-69, the 746-806 MHZ Band)

COMMENTS TO THE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING

Submitted by:
San Juan County
117 South Main #202
Post Office Box 9
Monticello, Utah 84535

Date Submitted: 03 September 1997

INTRODUCTION

1. In its notice, the Commission stated its intention to alter the existing television band by removing current and future use of television channels 60-69. The Commission cited a need for public safety, fixed and mobile services as the reason for doing this. San Juan County believe that this action could have a severe negative impact upon rural television and public safety within the San Juan County area.

BACKGROUND

2. While translators and LPTV stations are considered a secondary service, they are the primary source of television to a large portion of this country. Because of the large geographical area covered by markets such as Salt Lake City, commercial and non-commercial stations use a chain of translators to reach communities, that in

our County is over 300 miles from the main transmitter sites in Salt Lake City, yet it is considered part of the same market. In order to reach the public in over eight different communities in our County, the television signals are relayed from one translator to the next until it reaches the community. When all stations and communities are considered, this can create an elaborately interconnected web of translators.

3. The advent of DTV allocations has already put a severe strain on existing translator networks. The Commission itself in its DTV proceeding found insufficient spectrum to preserve all existing LPTV and TV translator stations. By removing 10 additional channel allocations, some parts of these translator networks simply will not be recoverable. For those stations that may be able to relocate their channel allocation, restoring translator operations will still cost the owners, which in our case in the county taxpayers, a significant amount. A preliminary study conducted in the northeast corner of Utah indicates that a total of 107 translators could be displaced or impacted, with a replacement costs of up to \$25,000.00 for each translator. San Juan County believes that these replacement costs would be similar for our County. The large financial burden will be carried, for the most part, on the backs of local school districts (public/educational television), service groups, and municipal governments. This places an unfair burden upon the rural population of this county. It is a burden for which this County and its citizens will not be financially prepared.

4. In addition to the financial considerations, there is a significant public safety

risk involved in dislocating these LPTV and translator relay networks. Local commercial stations provide new access to breaking local stories that can help rural citizens realize imminent danger; more importantly, translator networks have been approved by the FCC as State Relays for the Emergency Alert System (EAS) in Utah. This state of the art system was just implemented on January 1, 1997 and has already helped save lives by using the broadcast media to relay important evacuation information quickly to citizens in rural communities. For the first time, residents of San Juan County have the benefit of an emergency alert system that will work and provide the needed alerts and warnings. By removing these translators relays either technically or financially, the FCC will bar San Juan County communities from receiving public safety information on the EAS system.

COMMENTS

5. San Juan County agrees with the Commission in its assessment of the needs found in the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee report (PSWAC) as they relate to major, RF-intensive markets. San Juan County does not believe that a rule making such as this should apply to the entire country when only 21 major markets are specified in the report. Most markets, such as Utah, have many unused public safety frequencies. Most public safety organizations are not financially able to operate on all the frequencies currently allotted to them. San Juan County asks that the Commission consider changing the wording on this rule to allow for public safety, fixed, and mobile

services in this band only when (1) that need can be clearly demonstrated, (2) the organization requesting the bandwidth can demonstrate adequate financial backing, and (3) no other frequencies are available.

6. San Juan County urges the Commission, as is suggested in Paragraph 20 of the NPRM, to delay the auction and reallocation of these frequencies until the end of the DTV transition period. At that time sufficient bandwidth may be available to relocate displaced full service and secondary service transmitters.

7. San Juan County agrees with the Commission when it states "*Public Safety services are essential to the well being of the American public.....Radio-based communications allow public safety agencies to pass information quickly , coordinate their efforts, and warn of impending danger.*" The EAS network has proven itself an essential radio-based tool for public safety. San Juan County, in addition to being involved with the re-broadcasting of television signals, also provides the radio communication network for county sheriff, county fire, county ambulance, municipal fire and police and well as dispatch services for federal and state agencies. The current system of frequencies for both television and public safety radio is working system sufficiently well. San Juan County asks that the Commission exempt from this process any LPTV or Translator that carries the EAS signal as part of an FCC approved relay system where that system is a designated State Primary or State Relay. Furthermore, these stations should be protected from interference generated by the operation of

public safety, fixed or mobile signals in this band that may impede or prevent the dissemination of the EAS signal.

8. San Juan County asks that the Commission consider wording in this Rule Making that would make it a mandatory part of the approval process for a new licensee to enter into a signed agreement with the incumbent LPTV or Translator operator whereby the incumbent is financially reimbursed by the licensee for the costs of moving to a new frequency.



Rick M. Bailey, AA
San Juan County Commission

FCC Translator Database for Utah

| Type | License City | Call Sig | Type | Owner | Street Address | City | State | Zip |
|------------|---------------------|----------|---------|-----------------|----------------|------------|-------|-------|
| Translator | MONTEZUMA CREEK-A | K02OI | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | MONTEZUMA CREEK-A | K05JN | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLUFF | K08MM | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | NAVAJO MOUNTAIN | K11TF | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | NAVAJO MOUNTAIN | K13WH | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLANDING & MONTICEL | K25FC | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLANDING, ETC. | K36AK | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLANDING, ETC. | K38AJ | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLANDING, ETC. | K42AD | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLANDING, ETC. | K44AG | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |
| Translator | BLANDING, ETC. | K46AF | License | SAN JUAN COUNTY | 117 S. Main St | Monticello | UT | 84535 |